

THE LEISURE HOUR.

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Courper.*



A STRANGE TRADER.

ANSON GREGG'S WEDDING.

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CHAPTER I.

"THIRTY mince pies, twenty-three apple pies, eight squash pies, six custard pies!"

A woman past middle life, standing in a large pantry, has two fingers raised towards its crowded shelves, and is counting over their contents.

"Thirty mince pies, twenty-one, two, three apple;

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six, seven, eight squash. Blossom! Blossom! I say, Blossom!"

At the call two blue eyes peep in at the open door, and a merry voice chimes in with,—

"Six plum puddings, two chicken pies, one hundred and twenty raspberry tarts, two stone jars full of fried dough nuts, four loaves of brown bread, six loaves of white, ten—"

"That is nothing at all; how could I have made such a mistake? There is not more than half enough.

D D

PRICE ONE PENNY.

Your father would be so mortified to have anything fail. I must heat the oven, and go to baking again," interrupted the mother. "Come, hurry, Blossom, or we shall never get through!"

"But, mother, there is only Anson and his father; one would think you expected to feed General Washington and all his army."

"Only Anson and his father! Why, child, what do you mean? There are John, and Hester, and Mary, with your Uncle Jerome's family, and your Aunt Mary; but what is the use of counting? the question is, What shall be done?"

"I will tell you, mother." Two arms are thrown lovingly around the mother's neck. Blossom's voice is full of mirthful pleading; but while they are settling domestic matters, let us close the pantry door, and make a beginning of our story in proper form.

In the year 17— but we will not give the precise date, some of our annals fail, and a sharp critic might detect inaccuracy—but in that grand old time, so teeming with all that is rich and rare for storied purposes, Mr. Merwin found himself in the Bay State, the youngest of sixteen children.

The homestead was a sterile farm, no place on it for the bride who was waiting for him in the sunny south, so he struck out into the wilderness of Vermont, found a green nook, an Alp, among the mountains, built a small log house, and brought her to it.

When Lucy Merwin put her foot over its threshold she said, and it was truly spoken, "she would not change it for that palace beyond the waters which had belonged to her coroneted ancestry."

Into this rough home came, in due time, John and Sam, Henry, Mary, Alice, Florence, Percy, and three others, whose names were written on the small grey slab in the corner of the garden, and then, Blossom.

It must not be supposed she received this name at the baptismal font. Her father and mother knew well there was not a minister in the land who would drop the "holy water" upon it, and in their own veins ran too much Puritan blood to have asked, perhaps to have wished it. The benediction of a scripture name was not willingly, in most cases, withheld from the newborn immortal. Mrs. Merwin, loving and trusting her husband in all things, had yet a troubled thought often in her heart, that this peculiar blessing they had never claimed, nor did she understand the reason why they had not; it would have been perfectly unintelligible to her had he confessed that the plain, simple, old-time sound of the common Puritan names was almost painful to him.

With the dash of genuine poetry which God had given him she had no sympathy; she felt its influence surrounding even her homely everyday life, making it, in mysterious ways, bright and beautiful; but she never divined the source. Year after year they lived together there, she growing gentler, lovelier, more perfect as wife and mother, and he, in silent, unshared communion with those hoary mountains that hung over him every morning with their wonder-filled clouds and mists, and every evening with their giant shadows, clothed in regal purple, beckoning—beckoning to him for ever, until his life became a poem, full of deep meaning, of hidden longings, and of unuttered thoughts.

When Blossom was born, and he looked into her puny face, he could think only how small the grave would be he should so soon dig in the sacred corner,

so when his mother proposed to expiate their former baptismal wrong by calling her "Bathsheba," her father made no objection. "Bathsheba," he said, with a shudder, "let it be," and Bathsheba it was, "in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen!" But taking her from the minister's arms, her father's heart whispered over her the pet name of Blossom.

Putting his hand gently on her head, as he gave her to her mother, he whispered again, "Blossom!" and so, in the very face of the minister, and the font, and the sacred rill, the babe was rebaptized.

As years passed on, she unfolded with the other wild flowers in her mountain home. None lovelier, none that made the solitary place more rejoice. Fair and frail, she struck her tiny rootlets deep into her father's heart, until their two natures grew into one, and she became to him the outward expression of all that had been before deep, sacred, and hidden. No beauty-loving Greek ever worshipped an ideal more idolatrously than this father worshipped at the shrine of his child's beauty and goodness. She was in truth the very Blossom of his life.

It was hard, then, when Anson Gregg, hunter in this wild region, found the lonely homestead, found the pretty Blossom there, wooed and won her; and the preparations with which our chapter opens are for the wedding feast.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN Anson Gregg first came to Mr. Merwin's home he had in his pocket this important paper. We shall take the liberty of opening and transcribing it.

"I, Anson Gregg, offered myself as volunteer to Colonel Elhan Allan in the spring of 1775, determined to help him take Ticonderoga and West Point. In May I received a second-lieutenant's commission in Captain Grant's company. Colonel Seth Warner's regiment went into Canada, and was at the taking of St. John's and Montreal. In the summer of 1776 I received a first-lieutenant's commission, and joined the army at Ticonderoga in 1777. For the rest, I dedicate myself to God and my country, only praying that whatever may happen to me personally, my beloved land may be free."

It was an odd idea of Lieutenant Gregg's to carry this about him, but that he had reasons for so doing we shall see.

At this point in our story it is necessary to give a slight sketch of military affairs.

In the year 1777 the British had the control of Lake Champlain. Burgoyne, with his fleet, had sailed down from Canada, bringing with him large foraging parties of Indians. These savages landed upon the shores, and spread terror and devastation wherever they went. Taking possession of Crown Point, the English were complete masters of the surrounding country, and the whole American army watched them with most intense anxiety and distrust.

Feeling the advantage and importance of their position, the British were desirous to make every movement with the greatest secrecy and dispatch. Borrowing for their own use the cunning craftiness of their Indian allies, they supposed their enemy would do the same, and one important part of their strategy was to guard against deception, and to discover and arrest spies.

Small boats, manned by a few sailors, were kept

constantly rowing up and down the lake, touching the shore wherever a human being made his appearance, and sometimes by persuasion, but oftener by force, carrying him on board one of the large ships which lay at anchor near Crown Point.

One of these boats, containing four sailors and two young British officers, came one morning, after a long and useless row, suddenly in sight of a grotesque figure, whose appearance called forth long and repeated bursts of merriment from the crew.

"Hullo, daddy," called an officer, rising and lifting his cap with the most precise military etiquette. "A fine morning this. Come aboard and have a sail!"

The man addressed was standing near the shore. As soon as he heard the invitation he lifted his hat in perfect imitation of the officer, and stepped down as if it was his intention to walk through the water to the boat.

"Hold on," shouted the same voice. "What are you about there?"

The man held both hands out as if imploring help for a moment, then went cautiously back, and drew himself up to his full height. Standing there on the narrow pebbly beach, with the dark belt of firs behind him for a background, he presented a singular and most fantastic appearance.

Above common height, with a great stalwart frame, he gave the impression at once, and irresistibly, of being either an idiot or insane. He wore an old regimental coat, trimmed with tarnished lace and worn gilt buttons. The skirt was long, and on its extremity were bunches of flowers curiously wrought in gold thread. The flowers had a ghost-like look, as if the crumbled fingers which had made were still at work upon them. The body of the garment was short, the corners rounded off in front, the collar stiff and erect, and the sleeves so far up the brawny wrists as to expose great swelling muscles with a language of their own.

A faded red velvet vest was buttoned to the man's massive brown throat, leaving a space between itself and some blue home-spun trowsers of the kind commonly worn by the farmers of Vermont. These trowsers were short, not reaching the top of low black socks, but displaying the calf of the leg in true Highland style. His shoes were simply soles of stout leather bound on to his feet by strips of coloured cloth, in the fashion of the Italian peasantry.

An old soldier's cap, trimmed by the October leaves of the brilliant maple, with which the woods abound, and two large bright rooster's feathers, completed his dress. His face gave no lie, by one look of intelligence or common sense, to the story which his clothes told.

Long, light hair fell, rather than lay, all over his forehead and down almost into the grey eyes, which, vacant and listless, kept the same expression, no matter what was said to him, or what he answered, as the boat approached the shore.

He held a basket in each hand, and though he performed many grotesque antics, these were always held firmly and steadily.

"Captain of the Light Horse! will your worshipful highness condescend to come on board?" asked the officer, who had hailed the man.

"Thank'ee," said the man, hurrying to the boat, as its keel grated sharply on the sand, with that shuffling gait which indicates the want of power in the will over the muscles.

"He is hung together like a dancing Jack," said one of the sailors. "I hope he will sit still when he

gets on board, or he will send us all to Davy's locker."

"Put him astern there," answered the officer, helping him in unceremoniously, for he seemed more inclined to enter head first than in any other way. "Now," shaking him down on to a seat, "sit still, show what you have there, and out with your whole story, if you don't want a chance of telling it to the pickerel below. Plain words, and true, daddy; no more playing the fool."

"Butter," said the man, uncovering with formal care his largest basket. "Marm made it out of Bess Brown's milk, you know; Bess Brown short horns, not Bess Brown long. That are one with the long tail, that ha'aint got no white hairs on't, and two black feet. Crosses," moving his hands as if he were milking, "won't give down milk in the blue pail, wants the brown, that ha'aint got no handle."

Here he broke out with a shout that made one of the sailors drop his oar into the water:—

"Pretty cow, pretty cow, give down your milk,
And I will give you a gown of silk,
A gown of silk, and a ribbon gay,
If you will give down your milk to-day."

"Stop your noise," commanded the officer, "or I will pepper that huge carcass of yours; and speak to the point."

Uncovering the other basket, the man dropped his voice a note or two, and sang,—

"Cock-a-doodle-doo, our hen has lost her shoe,
But she laid eggs enough for two."

"Which means," said the officer, smiling in spite of his vexation, "that you have eggs and butter for sale."

"Five pounds of butter, five pounds of king gold," answered the man, chuckling; "forty-eight eggs, one pound—six pound," and he held his baskets towards the officer.

"Six beatings and half-a-dozen duckings, you fool of a Jew," exclaimed the officer, in a half-angry tone. "Hand those baskets over to me, Rolen; we will teach the rebels that we buy their provisions at our own price, as they would like to buy our tea."

The man spread his hands out over his baskets, and the big bare veins in his wrists swelled ominously.

The sailor's hand was instantly withdrawn, and he said, respectfully,—

"Let him keep it, your honour, until we reach the ship."

The officer nodded assent, and without any further attempts at conversation, the boat was turned direct for Crown Point.

CHAPTER III.

SITTING quietly in the stern of the boat, the idiot seemed intent on counting over his eggs, carrying on at the same time a muttered conversation with them.

"Ay, ay, little duck-legs, could tell that egg of yours anywhere, flat at both ends, and ha'aint got much yolk in it nary, and yet, old fellar, you make more fuss than any on 'um when you've been and gone and done it. Little Spotty's, three on 'um, cause, can't you see," addressing the officer with a queer, quick change of manner and position, "she thought she had hid 'um, all of 'um, down there in the eel grass, close by goose pond, where the big turkey is that goes—" and he imitated the gobbling of a turkey so perfectly that it again called shouts of

laughter from the boat's crew. The noise caught the attention of the officers on board the nearest ship, and they were immediately signalled to come on board.

"Take that for your noise," said the officer, giving the man at the same time a blow with the butt end of his musket.

There was a flash from the dull grey eye; then sinking into a corner, the idiot dropped his head, and continued his muttering in a lower and more indistinct tone.

The boat changed its course, and rowed at once towards the ship, upon whose deck was seen an unusual bustle. The dull life of waiting was to be for a moment interrupted, and in spite of the severe discipline maintained on board a man-of-war, as the boat came alongside it was received with loud laughter and cheers.

"What kind of ballast do you call that, Wilton?" asked the officer awaiting them. "Man, beast, bird, fish, or fowl?"

"A little of all, and not much of either," was the reply. "We picked him up at Chimney Point, and were going to take him where we could trade for his butter and eggs on our own terms."

"Bring him aboard; we will haul over his craft."

"And if you find one grain of sense amongst it, you will do more than I have. Look there," and Wilton pointed to the man, who, having risen in the stern of the boat, was lifting his old cap with one hand, and with the other was pointing, with the expression of a puzzled child, to the black mouths of the cannon, which were frowning down just above his head.

"Pumps, black pumps," he said to himself, with an idiotic grin, "Peter crawl in?"

This request was addressed to the officer on board the ship, who immediately answered,—

"Yes, Peter, crawl in; it will be the shortest way of examining you. Give him a hand there. Hoist him up."

Four sailors took hold of Peter, as the man had now named himself, and attempted to raise him; but, though he seemed to be making every exertion to aid them, they succeeded in lifting him but a few inches from the boat.

"By Saint George!" said one of the men, staggering under the weight, "I think he weighs a hundred stone cool!"

"Might as well heave a man-of-war," added another, dropping his hold. "It's the dragon himself, I'm thinking; for the harder I lift, the heavier he grows."

Peter looked from one man to another with the expression a great animal might have been supposed to have worn, then catching the end of a rope, which was hanging over the side of the vessel, he swung himself easily upon a cannon, and sat astride it. Leaning over, he ran his arm into the mouth, then looked with a sidelong glance at his broad shoulders, and began to sing,—

"Three feet and a half,
A cow and a calf,
A church and a steeple,
And all the good people,
And yet it is said
He went hungry to bed."

His dull eyes wandered slowly around the ship, and he counted out loud the number of cannon.

"Terrible lot of pumps," he ended with, "drain

the lake dry. Poor pickerels!" in a tone of tender pity; then he let himself drop easily on deck, and was at once surrounded by all not on duty.

A series of bantering questions were now commenced, to which Peter sometimes made a quick retort, which turned the laugh upon the questioner, and sometimes, as if entirely unable to comprehend what was said, dropped his chin upon his big breast, opened his mouth, and grunted like a pig.

The second officer of the ship, who had been a silent and intent observer since he came on board, now said a few words in a low tone to the captain. An immediate order was given for the crew to disperse, and for Peter to go below.

A flush spread for an instant over the man's cheeks, and he hesitated to obey, but seeing that force would be used if he did not, he raised his hand to his mouth and obeyed.

"Remove that coat," were the first words he heard, as he found himself below deck, surrounded by men whose uniform told him they were all officers.

Peter pulled first at one sleeve, then at the other, but they refused to be moved.

"Assist him, there," sternly commanded the captain; "I am mistaken if that coat does not hold something besides a rebel."

Four strong hands were laid upon the coat, and as Peter made no resistance it was soon removed.

"Search every part of it, I scent a spy."

The old coat was used to such handling. It turned its pockets inside out, lifted its heavy folds, and laid over its embroidered cuffs, almost of itself.

"I scent nothing but a fool," said another officer, with ill-concealed contempt. "If the rebels send such men for spies, they are welcome to all the information they will bring."

As the coat told no tales, the rest of Peter's dress was unceremoniously handled, he turning himself from side to side, laughing and muttering in the most unconcerned and incoherent way; but nothing being found to corroborate the suspicion, he was dismissed with the order that he should be locked up for the present out of the way of liquor and the crew.

In obedience to this command, he was thrust into a very small room at the end of the cabin, and the key turned upon him. For the purpose of a prison this was as safe as the deepest dungeon in the ducal palace at Venice. Peter could not stand upright in it, nor could he at first see an inch in any direction. He remained for a few minutes in the position he had been obliged to assume when thrust in, and as he stood with his head bent forward he caught the sound of the officers' voices in the adjoining cabin.

It was well for him that there were no observers now, for his whole expression instantly changed. He put his ear close to the crack in the door, and listened with an intentness which did not show the lack of a desire to comprehend, whatever may have been his ability. And there he stood, hardly daring even to breathe, until the speakers one by one left the cabin, and the conversation ceased.

Hours passed on. The man was accustomed to measure time without either clock or sundial, and he knew when the early morning hour at which he had entered the ship had changed into noon, and noon into night, and as yet no one had come near him to offer food or drink. Could it be that he was forgotten? To be so was precisely what he wished, and he took great care not by the slightest sound to remind any one of his existence.

Evening came at length, and lights gleamed into his darkness. Were they coming at last? Soon followed the sound of footsteps, and the long, silent hours were broken by the indistinct murmur of low voices in the adjoining cabin. So low were they that his listening was painfully intense. Great beads of perspiration rolled down his face, and his respiration, from the bent position he was obliged to assume, and the exhausted air of his room, became so laboured, he feared every instant lest it should betray him, and yet there he stood, and there he listened without catching one intelligible word until the dead of night. Then the cautious tones of those in conversation became louder, and at length, "Thank God," said the prisoner, fervently, in a whisper, the strangeness of whose sound startled him, "I can hear at last."

Incredible as it may seem, it is yet a fact, that in the cabin a council of war was being held, the results of which were to affect the whole campaign, and that, with every other caution taken to keep the matters discussed secret, the imprisoned idiot had been forgotten.

The plans detailed by the British officers were those, rumours of which had reached the colonists, but which, owing to their atrocity, had not been believed. A general command was to be issued to the Indians and freebooters who thronged the English camp, to scour the country on the east side of the lake, as far as the range of the Green Mountains, plundering the inhabitants of furniture, cattle, and herds, burning the houses, and carrying the men captive to Montreal, where they were to be tried and dealt with as traitors. The women and children were to be allowed an escort over the mountains, but were to be prevented from returning to the spot that had once been home.

This plan met with warm opposition from the greater part of the British officers, but General Burgoyne's patience was wearied out by the protracted nature of a quarrel which was considered at home only a matter of a few months, and its endurance culpable, if not cowardly, negligence on the part of the commander-in-chief. He determined by any means, fair or foul, to bring it to a speedy close. This wholesale robbery was to be the first in a series which should devastate the land.

It was in the early grey of the morning that the council broke up. As one by one its dread secrets had become known to the prisoner, strength had been sent to him, perhaps in answer to his many agonised prayers for it, to listen with an intense attention, difficult to conceive under the circumstances of his confinement, to every word said. He understood each plan to its minutest particulars; and as the long outline of destruction, captivity, and death swept through his tired brain, it seemed to him as if the cold fingers were already closing upon him as the first victim.

Taking from out a curious twist in the back of his long light hair, which had escaped the vigilance of those who searched him, a small bit of paper, he spread it open and measured it carefully with his fingers. He seemed anxious to convince himself that it was all there. Mechanically, as he did so, he repeated its contents, his lips making no sound as the words were formed: "I, Anson Gregg, offered myself to Colonel Elhan Allan in the spring of 1775."

Anson Gregg it was here as a spy, and this morning, the cold grey light of which was just beginning

to streak into his prison, was the same light that had waked up Blossom Merwin to the half-timid, half-joyful consciousness that it had come to usher in her wedding day.

Anson saw it, and realised all: the dangers that threatened his country, the dangers that threatened his bride, and the dangers which threatened himself. Never had his own life seemed of such priceless value—never, amid all his perils, so desperate the chance of saving it. Strong-minded and lion-hearted, what availed to him either sense or courage? Utterly helpless, a closed tomb could not have shut him off more completely from rescue or hope. Faint from the close air and want of food, bewildered, and at last rendered frantic, he roused himself, and beat upon his door with the strength of a giant. Come else what might, there must be an end of this.

CHAPTER IV.

THE noise was immediately heard by the watch on deck, and by a superior officer, who having found the hour late at the breaking up of the council, had remained on board this ship, hoping to snatch a few moments' rest before he issued the command which should inaugurate the reign of blood and terror. He had known nothing of the arrest of the spy, or of his confinement in so unusual a place; but now, on hearing the noise, so unexpected at such a time, a dread foreboding flashed upon him.

He was at the door as soon as the watch, and while waiting for the key to be brought, learned the story; and then he knew how true his foreboding had been.

Lieutenant Gregg had forced himself down upon all-fours, and when the dim light of the ship's lantern was turned upon him he looked like a whipped animal. He imitated the cry of a hungry dog, closing his jaws suddenly with a snapping sound, and muttering with a peculiar whine,—

"Peter's a hungry. Peter wants his dinner, poor Peter!" Then he suddenly sprang up, and made a rush through the door; but the officer's hand was upon him, even before his lips could utter the command for the idiot's arrest.

"Hold him fast!" he cried to the watch; "he shall have short shrift. Call up the men. In ten minutes see that he is swinging from the yard-arm!"

"Hang him!" exclaimed one of the watch, in dismay, at the same time laying an iron gripe upon Anson Gregg's arm. "What has the poor fool done?"

"He has ears, and a mouth. Enough! time flies; not a moment is to be lost. Officers and men, to your posts!"

His loud thunder tones roused every sleeper on board. Half-dressed men, with their weapons in their hands, poured on deck, down into the cabin, up into the rigging; every spot on that large ship in a short space of time was alive with human beings.

The cause of this unexpected summons was supposed to be a sudden attack on the ship by the rebels. Each gunner flew to his gun, and in the dim morning light, figures glided silently, with the utmost precision, every one to his post.

In the midst of all this alarm Lieutenant Gregg was hurried on deck.

"You will try him by court-martial?" asked the captain of the ship.

"No!" thundered the general, in reply; "not a breath shall be left in his body to utter a word by the

time a court-martial could take their seats. To the yard-arm, short rope, and true; so perish all spies and traitors!"

"But, my lord," interposed another officer, in whose voice Lieutenant Gregg recognised the voice of the man who had pleaded most warmly for mild measures with the colonists, "the man is an idiot; if he has heard our counsels he has not sense enough to repeat them."

With an impatient gesture the general beckoned the men who were holding Anson Gregg to move on, saying only in reply,—

"This is no time for trifling. If that fellow escapes, Washington will be deep in our secrets before this sun sets."

"I did not plead for a trifle, my lord," answered the officer; "I asked that the poor idiot might not be unjustly deprived of life, without at least the form of a trial."

"*Unjustly!*" repeated the general, turning full upon the officer a face pale and rigid from alarm and excitement.

"Yes, my lord," calmly returning the look; "I protest against this injustice, in the presence of all these witnesses. No common felon taken in the very act of murder can, thank God, be punished, according to his most gracious Majesty's laws, without a trial by judge and jury."

"Arrest Colonel Henry Norton for mutiny!" shouted the angry general.

But Colonel Norton was a favourite on board, and now, to those just-minded English sailors, so decidedly in the right, that not a marshal moved to execute the order.

In the silence that ensued, the angry expression of the general's face gradually changed into one of astonishment. Stepping coolly and quietly in among the men, he commanded a platoon of soldiers to prepare for duty.

They immediately obeyed; and in the dusky light might be seen a long file of men, with carabines outstretched, and hands upon the triggers, looking like statues, so still and motionless did they instantly become.

"Arrest Colonel Henry Norton!" reiterated the general to the cowering marshals. But again the same ominous silence—not a man among them moved.

"In the absence of obedience on the part of those whose duty it is," and the general's voice was now low and solemn, as if the shadow of death had fallen over it, "I command James Smithton, first-mate of this ship, to arrest Colonel Norton."

James Smithton would have stepped forward, but strong hands held him fast. Colonel Norton's company were moving quietly together from different parts of the ship. Already a dozen had gathered around their officer.

There was no mistaking the aspect of affairs. The greater part of the ship's crew would be, indeed were, in open mutiny; and standing there among them, cognisant of it all, was the American spy.

The general watched them anxiously. He was used to absolute and unconditional obedience. Never in his whole professional career had he been disobeyed before; but he was in truth a kind as well as resolute man. During this moment of silence he thought, as only a good, brave man can think, with a consciousness of his dread responsibility to God and his country. Then, drawing from his pocket his

watch, and fixing his eyes upon its fast moving hands, he said, but with a touch of sorrow in his voice,—

"If Colonel Norton is not arrested before my minute hand has twice completed its circle, my order will be to fire in among you, and God have mercy on your souls. Steady! Aim!"

The carabines were brought on a level with the men, and already had that death signal completed one round, when Colonel Norton stepped forward and said,—

"It is unusual, my lord, for one to arrest himself; but I yield my sword, and am ready to await the sentence of my peers."

Bending on one knee, he presented the hilt of his sword to his general; then rose, and folded his arms upon his breast.

"Disperse!" thundered the general, waving his hand towards the swaying and uncertain crowd. "Colonel Norton is my prisoner, and shall await his sentence."

For an instant the colonel raised his hand too, imploringly. The soldiers obeyed him, sorrowfully, with angry, dark looks, and muttered curses.

"Shoulder! march!" was the next command, and the armed platoon turned as one man, and frowningly as the rest, moved away.

"Halt!" cried the general, as they came under the yard-arm, from which the rope was swinging, and the butts of the carabines rung on to the deck with a sound which startled the neighbouring watch.

"Forward with the spy! So perish all rebels!" The general, as he issued this order, turned to the spot where he had last noticed the spy, just in time to see the two sailors who held him reeling like drunken men, and the top of the rooster's feathers disappearing from below the railing which surrounded the ship.

HOLIDAYS, AND HOW TO KEEP THEM.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE REGULAR SWISS ROUND."

WHAT are holidays? Holydays. You may spell the word with a "y" or an "i," and the fact remains that the very word itself testifies to the righteousness of rest. We do not, perhaps, sufficiently realise how large a space it fills in our lives, and in all life. How much time is spent in the mystery of sleep; and in waking hours, even by busy people, in doing nothing at all! Rest is not a luxury, but a necessity. It is more,—it is a duty. We see a consecration of rest in the fourth commandment. It is divine; it belongs to the moral, not the ceremonial law. It is well to remember this in these days of unrest, when the face of the land is overrun with bustle and fuss, and people afflicted with the disease of intense activity are for ever scheming and teasing how we may accelerate the processes of life, and employ spare minutes of our time. The best use a necessarily busy man can make of a few spare minutes is to do nothing. Rest is not idleness; in a very true sense it is a part, an integral part, of work. The old proverb that "God fills the sleeping fisherman's net" has many applications. If we really work when we work, we need not be ashamed of periods of sheer inaction, *i.e.*, as far as we are concerned. For nature is not idle with us at such times; she oils the uncoiled springs of action, screws up the wires which have

been out of tune, tightens the rigging of our ship, sets the grass growing over the worn and bare places in the pasture of our minds, overhauls the lumber-room of our memory, and puts the sap of life through a moral change; just as in winter she gathers back the buds and blades and seeds into her laboratory, and prepares them for the demand to which they are subjected when the heavy drain of spring-work comes.

Rest is one of the essentials of a holiday. And sometimes people who bustle off to keep one, miss the first charm of its purpose. Determined energetic pleasuring is hard work; and before a man sets about devoting a period of leisure to it, he might often do well to begin by taking his fill of sleep and sheer inaction.

Change is another essential in a holiday, which, be it observed, does not necessarily demand what we understand by travelling. A man, *e.g.*, who has a "hobby," is always provided with one of the chief materials for the making of a holiday. I do not particularly care what his hobby is, but a more useful animal cannot be kept. It is always ready saddled and bridled, and though we cannot say that it never costs much, for some hobbies are terribly expensive, yet there are plenty cheap enough. Let a man have some pursuit or occupation distinct from his ordinary work—let him botanise, collect beetles, butterflies, chipped flints; let him take an interest in chronicling the variations of the barometer, the rainfall, and the weather; let him sketch, fish, amuse himself with a turning lathe; let him carpenter, garden, keep an aquarium, what not. If he cannot swim, or wade deep, let him dabble in something. And though his works, observations, and collections may not be any great or definite addition to the stores of human knowledge, and may even be derided by conceited experts, they are of incalculable value to himself. He is never at a loss when he gets a holiday, even a few spare hours, for he is always prepared with a wholesome change from the pressure or monotony of his business; and when he travels he has sources of interest opened to him which are shut to the man who seeks recreation by the mere "change of scene," as it is called.

Another requirement of a holiday—a real holiday—is, that it should be divested as much as possible of responsibility. There are some excellent people who seem to think that directly they stop working their world will stand still. And thus, when they quit home they leave precise directions as to where they may be found on certain days, have all their letters forwarded to them, and take ever so many other pains to undo what they profess to be doing. When you get the chance of liberty, use it. Believe that the skies will not fall even though you withdraw your support. If you are afraid of being lost sight of, label yourself as well as your luggage. The world is a small place, and it is difficult to hide, even if you try to do so. Let those who are fortunate in having the chance of a holiday, accept the fact that they may slip for a little while from the place they fill. Let them decline the persecuting train of letters, and the interrupting long shots of telegrams, and when they come back find that the grass is still growing, the sun still shining, people still rising up and lying down, and that, in short, their work, let alone the small world, is really none the worse for the temporary withdrawal of their advice and assistance.

This refers primarily to the case of those who are

happy in being able to have a holiday of some days, or even weeks, in duration. If they want rest, if they have earned it, let them not be afraid or ashamed to pitch the whole bundle of accustomed work into a corner, and leave it till they come back, for so alone can they secure that sense of escape from commonplace but importunate responsibilities which is an essential ingredient of a holiday.

And remember, too, that recreation is a vital element of the holiday. This word has been abused, and has somehow got to degrade itself with a lower sense than it deserves. In a true holiday we gather new life for work. We generate fresh steam in our boilers. We give ourselves and our small family of wits an airing in the sunshine, that they may get another store of energy. How close this thought of recreation comes to divine rest! We go that we may accumulate fresh strength for our duty; not to kill time, not to fill gaps in an idle life, but to subject the soil of our minds to what used to be called in some parts of the country, a "summer tilling." A "summer tilt" was a field which was let alone for a season. Nowadays, people want crops off every acre every year. And the land is made drunk, is stimulated, if you prefer the word, with guano, or what not; and I dare say it is all right. But there was some sense in the old-fashioned "summer-tilt," and at any rate it is a fair illustration of what the purpose of a holiday should be—true recreation. Not mere indulgence, not debauch, not the wanton yielding to the sheer spirit of licence; but recreation, renewal, for the wholesomer stronger discharge of our duty when we get home. That is no "holy" day when the man comes back to his work with bleared eyes, a racking head-ache, and a shaky hand. Such holidays do no real good. It is true that in this age, in some places, work is so pressing that a man is drained of more strength than he ought to part with, and then nature avenges herself, and tempts him to accelerate the process of escape from care by indulgence in that intemperance which is the curse of our land. A delusive attempt. The drunken holiday may indeed put away all thought or remembrance of toil for a few hours, but it is itself a terrible draft upon the life which the holiday-maker professes to renew.

After these few words about the essential elements of a holiday, and the way in which it should be kept, let me add a few more as to where we should go. We will not stop over those short holidays which give only a few hours of leisure. There is not elbow-room enough in them for much more than some little extra rest or play, perhaps a stroll by the river side with a rod, an afternoon's game of cricket, or a walk into the country, or the town, as the case may be. This extra rest, indeed, is of incalculable worth, but while we are talking of where to go, we find our range limited by time, on such an occasion. One thing is sure—that a holiday at a public-house, or one spent in a series of thirsty calls, is not likely to be "holy" or wholesome.

We will suppose, however, that we get, not a few hours only, but a whole day. Then, perhaps, we make it a very long one, and avail ourselves of one of the numerous excursion trains that run during the summer. These have the great recommendation that they take the holiday-maker away. They are not always very comfortable, but they give an impression of distance which is prized by such as are closely tied to work in the same town, perhaps in the same

office, factory, or shop, month after month. The excursion train whisks you off, and that is something. The journey itself consumes a large proportion of the holiday, but it is a journey, and involves a considerable change. Thus we plead for the excursion train, which is often looked upon with contempt by the regular travellers on a line. Its use is, indeed, too often marred by excess in drink; but this is no necessity, and the consciousness of a visit to some scene, perhaps a very considerable distance off, is a most striking feature of a modern whole holiday. Those who live in a provincial town, however, where there is no long tract of suburbs to be threaded before the real country can be reached, are, I am inclined to think, likely to overlook the pleasure and benefit which can be derived from an excursion leisurely made on foot, to the pleasantest spots in their immediate neighbourhood. There need not be any special show places to give a zest to these short quiet explorations. Indeed I am, once for all, in reference to long or brief holidays, tempted to think that the holiday-maker is often a sad slave to what are called "sights." Dare to shun sights, if you really have no appetite for them. Don't think that you are bound to "do" this or that thoroughly. Defy the catechising of your friends as to what you have seen. Look at what interests you, not necessarily at what people tell you you ought to see; or you may turn a day of wholesome rest into one of wearisome labour.

But let us return to the question where to go. If a man has a short holiday, say of a week, he can take the train and get set down in some of the loveliest parts of England in a few hours. Then I would advise him to walk. A walking tour, especially for those who have been tied close to sedentary work, is one of the best ways of spending a holiday. Let him take his knapsack, and walk, say through North Wales—it is but a small place—and be back again in a week, with comparatively small expenditure of money, and immense enjoyment. Wales, North Wales, is not only a most beautiful country, but its mountains are exquisite. I have seen a good many mountain ranges, but there is a form and shape in those of North Wales, which renders them in a measure unique. And they look bigger than they are.

Or our tourist, with a few days at his disposal, might tramp through the Lake district, or the country of the Peak in Derbyshire. They will repay him; only he had better go a-foot, with no more luggage than he can carry on his back or in his hand. Thus he will be superior on many occasions to all porters, omnibuses, and the like. I am loth to commend a visit to the seaside as it is generally paid. To be sure, you have the sea, which is ever old and young, a changing and yet constant friend. And you have the beach, either sand, on which you may set fresh footprints with a sense of traversing virgin ground after each waning of the water; or shingle, which provides the most luxurious couch on which to lie and listen to the drawl of the dying tide; or rocks, on which you can sit and watch the waves following on one another's shoulders in their charge against the stony shore. You can certainly have this at most watering-places; but the style and shallow fashion of these is, to my mind, monotonously oppressive. There is often a sort of toyshop look about them, and a donkey-driving, band-listening, telescopic weariness of pertinacity which is soon tiresome. Then, too generally, you are like flies in a web, the prey of the lodging-house keepers, who, poor people, of course

suck as much as possible out of the visitors whom they catch. If you want to combine sea air and exercise in a short holiday, take a walking tour by the seaside, and use the frequented watering-places only as stations in which to rest for a night or for a meal. There is a path by the shore along all the coasts of England, I mean that made and kept by the preventive service, who are ever pacing on their watch. This path keeps in sight of the sea. In and out, up and down, it will lead you by pleasant shores, and surely provide villages where you can find rest at some homely inn. Beside this path, which you might occasionally find too circuitous and slow, there is generally a good road not far from the sea leading you to one small town after another. A tour by the seaside, such as I have suggested, would be found to provide a most agreeable holiday.

But in these days we may be more ambitious. Even a week's leisure gives opportunity for a short visit to the Continent. There are many who have little to spend in a holiday, and little time to spend it in, who somehow have never realised that a trip to France or Belgium is easily within their powers. Let our country tourist visit Belgium, more foreign in many respects than many of the continental centres that are frequented by fashionable crowds; let him visit the charming quaint old cities and canals of Belgium. They are close by; you may travel there very cheaply, and for any one who has never been abroad before, I know no place which shall more immediately and strikingly illustrate the great separation that is made between England and the rest of Europe by the Straits of Dover. A little more time would enable our tourist to walk, say, in Brittany, or go up the Rhine and down again, taking, perhaps, a look at Holland.

Indeed now the playground of Europe, the scene of true recreation for thousands from all parts—east, north, west, and south—I mean the Alps, are very easily reached. You can leave London at 7.30 in the morning, get to Paris at six, take the night train at 8.30, traverse the flat plains of La Belle France (so called more from its fertility than its beauty, for it is mostly as level as a table), by Dijon, Pontalier, and Dôle, while you are fast asleep, and wake up next morning to find the train working its way through the range of the Jura, till a turn in the road opens out the lovely view across the lake of Neuchatel, when you can look over the snowy summits of the Bernese Oberland, and find yourself in Switzerland almost before you have finished the packet of sandwiches which you put into your pocket at Charing Cross. And once in Switzerland, I need not assert that you can have a most enjoyable holiday. You will not attempt anything ambitious in the way of mountain ascents, but you will find the ordinary paths steep enough to try your legs, and these ordinary paths will conduct you by the loveliest scenery in that glorious land. And you can travel cheaply, *if you like*. By walking, and taking as little baggage as possible—and it is surprising how little you can manage with if you try—you can have the most independent and exhilarating outing that a man can wish. Here though, I would advise any tourist not to try and do too much. I have seen many people make a sad toil of a Swiss holiday, though they have kept to the most beaten paths. They tire themselves, and are ashamed to admit that they are tired. Thus they may be physically and morally harmed. It would be superfluous

here to indicate any special routes which the holiday-maker should follow; every common guide-book gives abundance of them which may be depended upon. Only I would say, while you use these results of experience, and construct your tour by their aid, do not be seduced into thinking it will add to your pleasure to visit all the so-called sights, and "objects worthy of notice," which go to swell the pages and prices of guide-books.

To look much farther beyond our continent, the east and west hold out the chief attractions; for Polar seas and African deserts are the field of explorers, not tourists. Now the east presents special impediments and expense. You must have horses, tents, dragomans, and what not. But I wonder more do not visit the United States. Going to America used somehow to imply a departure closing all the past experience of life. "He is off to America" meant that a man had begun in a new world, and that you might almost look for him again in vain. So many people have gone to settle there for good that some do not realise how close America is to us, how easily we can visit it, and how much we can see in even a very short trip across the Atlantic. There are two ways of seeing a country or place—one is with a rapid glance, which leaves vivid impressions which we do not stay to repeat. The other is to sojourn there awhile; but a sojourn must be prolonged to produce a special effect. Some time must be allowed for the second

set of impressions to grow after the first have lost their distinctness, which they soon do when we have stopped even a few weeks in the same spot. Go and have a flying glance at America if you can. Six weeks there would do wonders; you might then easily run far south, and also traverse the whole continent to California and back by the strange rail which threads the prairie and the two great ranges of the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada. It is astonishing how much even a month in the United States would leave in your memory. We always recollect our first glimpses of places we have long heard of. For those who can afford the money, the same time as they spend at a stuffy watering-place, listening to the band and seeing people bobbing about at the tails of bathing-machines, would leave them with a sharp-cut recollection of the great cities of the east, the Mississippi, the Missouri, the Prairie, Niagara, the Lakes, Chicago, and the negroes and cotton fields of the south. Besides this you would have the keenest interest in seeing how differently many similar things are done in the old and new world; you would appreciate those thousand small points of divergence from what we are used to in places where we hear everybody speaking English, and which make America curiously foreign and yet not foreign. If a man has six weeks to spare, and can afford it, let him run across the Atlantic, and wonder that he never did so before.



WHERE ARE THE TEN TRIBES?

BY PROFESSOR RAWLINSON, M.A., AUTHOR OF THE "FIVE GREAT MONARCHIES."

IT is curious to observe how subjects, supposed to have been thoroughly discussed and utterly exhausted, crop up again after awhile, and exhibit just as much power of exciting and interesting men as if they had never engaged attention before—never been examined, sifted, argued out, and put away as "done with." An instance of the kind is the authorship of the "Letters of Junius," which is probably destined to continue to the end of time a matter upon which ingenious men will periodically waste their powers of ratiocination. Another similar subject is that which heads this article—Where are the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel?—what has become of them?—Are they to be regarded as existing still on some unknown portion of the earth's surface?—Or are any of the known nations of the earth their descendants? The literature of this subject is so large that even a condensed account of it would occupy more space than can be well afforded to it within the limits of such an article as the present one. The "Lost Tribes" have been found a hundred times by a hundred different travellers, and in a hundred different localities. Elaborate arguments have been published to show that they are identical with the people of Malabar, with the Kashmeerees, with the Affghans, with the Kurds, with the Anglo-Saxons, and with the Red Indians. A writer well versed in the literature, thus sums up its results:—"There is scarcely any human race so abject, forlorn, and dwindling, located anywhere between the Chinese and the American Indians, who have not been stated to be the Ten Tribes, which disappeared from history during and after the Babylonian captivity. If the books written on the Ten Tribes contained much truth, it would be difficult to say *where they are not*. And although these books, according to our opinion, generally bear stronger evidence of their writers' activity of imagination than the strength of their judgment, they lead, not individually but collectively, to some truth, if they only impress us with the fact that it is difficult to say *where the Ten Tribes are not*."*

Some thirty years ago a special interest was excited in England by the work of a Mr. J. Wilson (who called himself "A Witness of the Word of Prophecy"), entitled "Our Israelitish Origin; or, British Christians a Remnant of the true Israelites;" the object of which was to identify the Lost Tribes with the Anglo-Saxons, and so with the people of the British Islands. Though the arguments adduced were of the most flimsy and unsubstantial kind, still this work produced so much effect among the more religious classes, that it was thought worthy of a refutation, which was published by the Rev. E. Bickersteth in the year 1843. Mr. Wilson defended himself in a "Reply to the Objections of the Rev. E. Bickersteth," published in 1844; and here the controversy languished and expired, the victory, in the opinion of all men of intelligence, remaining *completely* with Mr. Bickersteth, who entirely disposed of all the arguments of his antagonist. In a short time Mr. Wilson and his book were forgotten, and our theological literature from 1845 to 1870 shows,

we believe, no trace of his opinion having been adopted by any writer of any (or even of no) reputation.

Recently, however, after a lapse of more than five-and-twenty years, the views of Mr. Wilson have been re-asserted in a pamphlet, which, we hear, is having a wonderful circulation. This *brochure* is entitled "Twenty-seven Identifications of the English Nation with the Lost House of Israel," and is (we believe) little more than a reproduction in a modern form of Mr. Wilson's treatise. It is not calculated to produce the slightest effect on the opinion of those competent to form one. Such effect as it may have, can be only on the ignorant and unlearned—on those who are unaware of the absolute and entire diversity in language, physical type, religious opinions, and manners and customs between the Israelites and the various races from whom the English nation can be shown historically to be descended.

To refute the "Identifications" would be a waste of labour, for which we have no inclination. What we propose in the present article is to point out, so far as we can, what has actually become of the Ten Tribes, and, where this is not possible, what has probably become of them. We cannot expect wholly to prevent in the future the recurrence of such idle and unprofitable exertions as the "Identifications" and "Our Israelitish Origin;" but we entertain a hope that a knowledge of the teachings of history upon the point may tend to check such speculations, and curtail the waste of time and thought which at present takes place in the reading of them.

In the first place, then, it is to be noted that the Ten Tribes were not carried away *wholly* into captivity either by Tiglath-Pileser, or by the Assyrian king who took Samaria, whether he were Shalmaneser or Sargon. This appears from many passages of Scripture, and especially from the account given in 2 Chron. xxxiv. and xxxv. of the proceedings of Josiah. Josiah ascended the throne of Judah in the year a.c. 641, eighty years after Samaria had been destroyed, and Israel carried away captive. Yet we find him making a progress through "the cities of Manasseh, and Ephraim, and Simeon, even unto Naphtali" (2 Chron. xxxiv. 6), and "cutting down all the idols *through all the land of Israel*" (ib. v. 7). And that these were not mere names remaining after the people were gone appears, first, from the statement that the Levites gathered money for the repairs of the Temple "of the hand of Manasseh and Ephraim and of all the remnant of Israel" (ib. v. 9); and, secondly, from the fact that the great passover which Josiah celebrated was attended, not only by "all Judah," but by "the children of Israel that were found" (ch. xxxv. 17, 18). It is clear that Josiah exercised a sovereignty over the entire "land of Israel," and found Israelites—"a remnant"—in all parts of it. These Israelites, who never quitted their land, became gradually, in course of time, mixed up with the foreign colonists from Babylonia, Susiana, and other places, whom the kings of Assyria transplanted to Palestine (2 K. xvii. 24; Ezra iv. 2, 9), forming thus the hybrid race which became known in history as "Samaritans." Though the Jews were in the habit of representing this people as "Cuthæan"—i.e.

* Kitto's "Cyclopedia of Biblical Literature," vol. ii. p. 893.

Babylonian—and of looking upon it as not only hostile, but alien, its own traditions were different, and always connected it with Ephraim and Manasseh. The "woman of Samaria" who conversed with our blessed Lord asked him, "Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this well?" (John iv. 12.) And the Samaritans of Nablus continue to the present day to claim the same parentage. Modern scholars are generally agreed that the claim is well founded. "The later events in the history of the kings of Jerusalem," writes the late Dean Milman,* "show that the expatriation of the Ten Tribes was by no means complete and permanent. Is it, then, an unreasonable supposition that the foreign colonists were lost in the remnant of the Israelitish people, and, though perhaps slowly and imperfectly weaned from their native superstitions, fell by degrees into the habits and belief of their adopted country?" "Thus it appears," says Dr. Davidson,† "that the people (i.e. the Samaritans) were a mixed race. The greater part of the Israelites had been carried away captive by the Assyrians, including the rich, the strong, and such as were able to bear arms. But the poor and the feeble had been left. The country had not been so entirely depopulated as to possess no Israelite whatever. The dregs of the populace, particularly those who appeared incapable of active service, were not taken away by the victors. With them, therefore, the heathen colonists became incorporated."

In the second place, those who were carried away, instead of being massed together (as the Jews appear to have been, about Babylon)—in which case there might have been a fair chance of their maintaining their ethnic unity—were at once scattered very widely. There placed in Haran, i.e. in Osrhoëne, or Western Mesopotamia; in Halah, or Chalcitis, the country about Ras-el-ain; in Gozan, or Mygdonia, on the River Khabour; and also in "the cities of the Medes." (See 2 K. xvii. 6; xviii. 11; 1 Chr. v. 26.) The tract over which they were spread extended twelve degrees (nearly 900 miles) from east to west, and was nowhere less than two degrees (138 miles) in breadth. In other words, it was at least fifteen times as large as the territory from which they had been taken. Distributed over this wide space, they can have formed at no time more than an insignificant element in the population. Their national traditions would, no doubt, have a tendency to keep them from amalgamating at once with the peoples among whom their lot was cast, and small Israelite communities may thus have continued for a while to exist in some of the more important towns—e.g. Nineveh and Rhages—as represented in the book of Tobit; but elsewhere it is probable that intermixture and absorption soon set in. There can be little doubt that, in the hundred and eighty years which intervened between the captivity of Israel and the edict of Cyrus, a large portion of the fugitives became inextricably intermingled with the former population of Mesopotamia and Media.

When, at the expiration of this period, Cyrus, about B.C. 538 or 537, having conquered Babylon, and been brought into personal contact with the Jews, and especially with Daniel, issued his famous edict (Ezra i. 2-4), an opportunity was afforded to the Israelites, no less than to the Jews, of returning to their own country. The entire tract over which the Israelites had been scattered was under the dominion

of Cyrus, and the terms of his proclamation were perfectly general, and clearly included them.* "All the people" of the "Lord God of Heaven" were invited to go up to Jerusalem, and "build the house of the Lord God of Israel" (Ezra i. 2 and 3.) And of this invitation it is clear that many Israelites took advantage. The writer of Chronicles tells us expressly that among the "first inhabitants that dwelt in their possessions in their cities," after the return from the captivity, were "children of Ephraim and Manasseh," as well as "children of Judah and Benjamin" (1 Chron. ix. 2, 3). He sums up those that returned under the four heads of "Israelites, Priests, Levites, and Nethinim" (ibid. verse 2.) His elaborate genealogies of the "sons of Reuben, Gad, Manasseh, Issachar, Naphtali, Ephraim, and Asher" (chs. v. and vii.) can only be accounted for by the supposition that persons of those tribes were included among the "Israel" of his day. Again, we find in Ezra (ch. ii.) and Nehemiah (ch. vii.) several cities mentioned as those whereto the returned captives belonged, which are Israelite, and not Jewish. Jericho, for instance, was an Israelite town (1 K. xvi. 34). So was Bethel (1 K. xii. 29). So again was Nebo (Num. xxxii. 38). Ezra and Nehemiah distinctly call those who returned "all Israel" (Ezra ii. 70; Neh. vii. 73), or "the people of Israel" (Ezra ii. 2; Neh. vii. 7). It is indicative of their feeling that the returned belonged to all the tribes, that they place at their head twelve chiefs.† In acknowledgment of the same fact, Zerubbabel and Jeshua, when they dedicated the Temple, offered to God "a sin-offering for all Israel, twelve he-goats, according to the number of the tribes of Israel" (Ezra vi. 17). Similarly, we are told of the first passover after the dedication, that "the children of Israel, which had come again out of the captivity, did eat, and kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy" (Ezra vi. 21, 22).

Thus it is evident that, although the bulk of those who returned with Zerubbabel were the descendants of such as had been carried off by Nebuchadnezzar, and consisted consequently of persons belonging to three tribes only—those of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi—yet there returned with them "a remnant of Israel"—a remnant sufficiently large to make the returned people representative, not of the curtailed Jewish kingdom of Rehoboam, but of the original kingdom of Saul, David, and Solomon. Hence, although the returned people is commonly called "Judah,"‡ or "Judah and Benjamin"|| phrases of larger extent are sometimes used, and we hear them addressed as "O House of Judah, and House of Israel!" (Zech. viii. 13), or spoken of as "Judah and Ephraim" (ib. ix. 13), or as "the House of Judah and the House of Joseph" (ib. x. 6).

The return of the exiles, after their long absence, and their re-establishment in Jerusalem and its neighbourhood, under the favour and protection of the great Cyrus, was a striking occurrence, and one that could not fail to draw to it the eyes and thoughts

* The fact that the copy of the decree of Cyrus, found in the reign of Darius (Ezra vi. 1, 2), was discovered at Achmetha (Agbatana or Ecbatana), the capital of Media, shows that the original publication extended to those parts of the empire in which the Ten Tribes had been located.

† Neh. vii. 7. In the corresponding passage of Ezra (ii. 2) one name, that of Nahamael, has accidentally fallen out.

‡ Or perhaps we should say *four* tribes; for the Simeonites, who had their portion "within the inheritance of the children of Judah" (Josh. xix. 1), seem to have been politically included in "Judah."

§ Ezra iv. 4, 6; v. 1; Hag. i. 1, 14; ii. 2, 21; Zech. ii. 12; viii. 15, 11, etc.

|| Ezra iv. 1; x. 9; Neh. xi. 4.

* "History of the Jews," vol. ii. p. 11 (2mo. edition).

† In Kitto's "Cyclopedia," vol. ii. p. 671.

of the surrounding peoples. We are told that the mixed population of Samaria requested permission to join the returned exiles, and to assist in the rebuilding of the Temple, but that their requests were refused (Ezra iv. 1-3). The refusal was bitterly resented, and doubtless lay at the root of that hostility which afterwards prevailed between the two nations, which made the Jews call every Samaritan a "Cuthæan," and a Samaritan woman wonder that a Jew should ask her for a draught of water. But this was not the whole of the effect produced by the return. There were some among the Samaritan population—persons in whose veins may have been pure (or nearly pure) Israelite blood—who were stirred by the strange event to reform their lives, to withdraw from idolatrous practices, and to join the religious worship, and probably the political communion of their brethren. We are informed that the first passover after the dedication was kept, not only by the children of Israel which were come again out of captivity, but also by "all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land" (Ezra vi. 21). Here, then, was a second introduction of an Israelite element into the predominantly Jewish community established at Jerusalem by the decree of Cyrus.

Eighty years after the return of the first exiles, and nearly sixty after their celebration of their first passover, the colony at Jerusalem was largely reinforced by the exertions of Ezra and the permission of Artaxerxes Longimanus. Here, again, as in the former case, the point of departure was Babylon (Ezra vii. 6), and the mass of those who returned belonged, no doubt, to the captivity of Nebuchadnezzar, and were descendants of Judah, Benjamin, or Levi. But Israelites of other tribes may have been, and probably were, intermingled with them. Artaxerxes' decree ran thus:—"Artaxerxes, king of kings, and Ezra the priest, a scribe of the law of the God of Heaven, perfect peace, &c. I make a decree that *all they of the people of Israel*, and of his priests and Levites, *in my realm*, which are minded of their own free will to go up to Jerusalem, go with thee" (ib. verses 12 and 13). And Ezra states that he "gathered together out of Israel chief men to go up with him" (ib. verse 28). Moreover, on his arrival at Jerusalem, the company which had come with him "offered burnt offerings unto the God of Israel, *twelve bullocks for all Israel*, and *twelve* he-goats for a sin-offering" (ib. viii. 35), a strong indication that there were among them persons from all the twelve tribes. After this, we find Ezra generally calling the entire community in and about Jerusalem by the name of "Israel," or "the people of Israel" (ch. ix. 1; ch. x. 1, 5, 10, 25), though sometimes he calls it—on account of its predominant elements—"Judah" (ch. x. 7), or "Judah and Benjamin" (ch. x. 9).

It appears, therefore, first, that a portion of the Ten Tribes remained in Palestine after the destruction of the Israelite kingdom, and either blended with the colonists from Babylon, Cutha, Susa, etc., or separated themselves from them on the rebuilding of the Temple, and joined the Jewish community; and it appears, secondly, that of those who were carried away captive, and dispersed over northern Mesopotamia and Media, a considerable number returned under Zerubbabel and again under Ezra, re-uniting themselves with the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, and forming with them one people. That the so-called Jews of our Lord's time were really Israelites

of various tribes is evident—1, From the constant application of the terms "Israel" and "Israelites" to them (Matt. ii. 20, 21; viii. 10; Luke i. 16, 54, 68, 80; ii. 25, 32; John i. 47, 49; Acts ii. 22; iv. 27; xiii. 16, 17, 24; xxi. 28; Rom. ix. 4, 31; x. 1, etc.); 2, From such expressions as those in Acts xxvi. 7 and James i. 1, where the Jews are spoken of as the "twelve tribes;" and 3, From the mention of Anna as a prophetess "of the tribe of Aser" (Luke ii. 36). The terms "Jew," "Judah," "Judæa," prevailed over the other tribal appellations, on account of the pre-eminence of the tribe of David, and of its capital city Jerusalem; but it was none the less felt and acknowledged that the people generally known as "Jews" contained among them descendants of all the twelve sons of Jacob.

Still, it may be asked—What became of that portion of the Ten Tribes which, having been carried into captivity by the Assyrians, did not take advantage of the decrees of Cyrus and Artaxerxes Longimanus, but remained in Mesopotamia and Media? The reply to this question can only be conjectural. As none of the Greek or Roman historians or geographers describe any people in these parts at all corresponding to the Israelites, it is probable that by the time of Alexander the Great they had become completely amalgamated with the mass of the population among which they had been introduced, and were undistinguishable from other Medes and Mesopotamians. It has been shown that from the first they formed but an insignificant element in the population of the region over which they were spread. Their disproportion to the rest of the population would increase, as their numbers sank by the attraction of the more religious and enterprising of them to Jerusalem in the times of Zerubbabel and Ezra. The weak remnant left, being devoid of strong religious feeling, and having given up the thought of national restoration, would have no motive for isolating itself, but, on the contrary, would be anxious to escape the disgrace of belonging to a servile class, and would assimilate itself in manners, customs, language, and religion to the old inhabitants. Such assimilation would be especially easy in Mesopotamia, where the nations were of Semitic origin, closely akin to the Israelites, and like them in most respects. In Media it would be more difficult, since the Medes were Arians, and therefore ethnically very different from the Hebrews; but in four hundred years—the interval that separates Shalmaneser and Sargon from Alexander—the difficulties may have been overcome, and the amalgamation, which commenced about B.C. 720, may have been complete in B.C. 330.

Finally, if any of the captives resisted the assimilating influences, and remained in language, religion, and manners still Israelites at the time of the Greek conquests, the probability is that they at that time, or soon after, coalesced with the "Jews of the Dispersion," who were a far more powerful body. A considerable number of the Jews never returned from the captivity, but preferred to remain in Babylonia, where they have continued ever since, and are still to be recognised in the Hebrew community of Baghdad. Others were removed from Palestine by the Seleucid kings, and planted in Antioch, Seleucia, Edessa, and other cities of their dominions. These Jewish colonies, which were highly favoured by the Syro-Macedonian monarchs, would exercise an irresistible attraction on any scattered Israelites, if such there were, who had retained their national traditions

and customs through the commotions and changes of four centuries. In this way, then, the last remnants of the Ten Tribes would almost necessarily have been absorbed, uniting with their brethren, who, though generally called "Jews," must be regarded as more properly "Israelites"—descendants, *i.e.*, not of one son only, but of all the twelve sons of Jacob.

A MIDLAND TOUR.

XVI.

BILSTON—WILLENHALL—WEDNESFIELD—NEW INVENTION—DARLASTON, ETC.

WE are still on our way to Wolverhampton. In the neighbourhood where we now are, may frequently be seen the lava-like remains of the ancient strata—the work of the subterranean fires which have consumed vast quantities of the coal of these districts:—the cinders are quarried for making and mending roads. We are told that, not many years since, the fire might be seen raging and rolling about in caverns like huge furnaces.

And now we again pass Wednesbury, and reach Bilston, "the blackest of the black"—of which it has been said that "more iron is made in Bilston fields than in the whole kingdom of Sweden." It is the most dreary and uninviting place we have seen (which is saying a great deal); the once (doubtless) green and flowery "Fields" are a desolate waste, the earth being everywhere turned up, and lying in wild chaotic heaps, hills, and mountains all around; everything appearing intensely dingy and rough, and dense volumes of smoke overspreading all. Here we have plenty of iron and coal mines, but they are well-nigh worked out: some of them were opened 500 years ago, and the whole soil is completely honeycombed. The coal here is very near the surface. As many as forty-four distinct strata may be seen in a depth of 140 feet. There is a mine hereabouts which is said to have been on fire for more than sixty years. Here Watt first used steam to blow the blast furnace; here Wilkinson, the friend of Boulton and Watt, and the "father of the Iron trade," carried on his enterprises in the manufacture of iron; and here we have now iron smelting-works, iron foundries, nail, screw, and wire manufactories. In January, 1872, there were twenty-four blast furnaces in the district, eighteen of which were "in blast." We hear that at the Highfield foundry 1,200 metallic bedsteads a week are turned out; and we believe one manufacturer here had an order for 16,000 iron telegraph-posts for India. Bilston is spoken of as "the centre of the hardware trade." It is famous for its grindstones (said to give it its name), and, moreover, has manufactories of tin-plate (for "the million"), and japanned and enamelled ware, including coal vases, trays, tea-caddies, baths, toilet services, etc. Among the curiosities of manufacture, it may be mentioned that more than 2,000 tea-caddies, and not less than 50,000 "waiters," are made weekly; that each great maker of trays has some 2,000 distinct patterns; that "waiters" are sold wholesale at a shilling a dozen; that the price paid for painting a common landscape is three-halfpence; and that a skilled artist can paint with ease two gross of small landscapes a day. Great advances have been made at Bilston in the application of art to japanning during

the last few years. Many women are employed in painting, japanning, and polishing.

Bilston is a very ancient town. The College of St. Mary, Wolverhampton, was endowed in the time of King Ethelred from its lands. (Sir Richard Pipe, Lord Mayor of London in the reign of Elizabeth, was a native of Bilston.) It is sadly notorious for the awful ravages of cholera in 1832 and 1849, when whole streets were depopulated, extensive manufactories stopped by the death of the workpeople, and coffins brought in cartloads from Birmingham, because they could not be knocked together fast enough in Bilston. But many improvements have since then been made, and are even now going on. Bilston was the first of "the seven towns" to have a system of sewerage. Twenty years ago the supply of drinking water came from some old disused coal pits, into which all sorts of things were thrown; now, good water and plenty of it, is brought in from Shropshire. Moreover, two railways now run through the place, and have swept away multitudes of the wretched dwellings with which it formerly teemed, and given it, as it were, a pair of lungs. And it is now said to be exceptionally healthy, and likely to withstand any epidemic as well as any town in England. Indeed, after all, Bilston promises to be a kind of model town for improvements. And none can doubt the public spirit of its inhabitants; for since the introduction of the Local Improvement Act, they have spent £190,000 in carrying out its intentions; they have erected public baths (very rare in the Black Country), and other useful and sanitary public institutions, and are now building a new town hall and free library,* the foundation-stone of which was recently laid with great public rejoicing. The library of the "Mechanics' Institution" (which, like similar institutions elsewhere, has fallen into decay) is to be turned over to the Free Library to give it a start. A recreation ground for the people has just been given to the town by an eminent philanthropist. It is a great question among the inhabitants of Bilston whether the town *has or has not* seen its last days. As its mines are almost exhausted, much will depend on the development of other industries.

The population of Bilston in 1861 was 24,364; in 1871 only 24,192; it is said, however, to be double what it was fifty years since. There are numerous places of worship, more especially Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist. Within the last half-century three churches, with commodious schools, have been erected, and a large number of chapels and schools also, by *voluntary contributions*. It was publicly stated, however, a short time since, by one of the parochial overseers, that there was no place worse off for education than Bilston, and that it was doubtful if half the children between five and thirteen years of age were receiving any education. From other sources we learn that there are plenty of schools, but that, while 4,000 want education, more than 1,500 are altogether untaught.

The parish church has 2,000 sittings, 750 of which

* The Free Library was at first intended to be a separate edifice, towards which a donation of 200 guineas was contributed by a townsman, another 200 guineas by "A Lady." It has since been decided to unite both Town Hall and Free Library in one building. The donations and subscriptions for the Free Library now amount to £1,200. Besides this, a Bazaar and Exhibition recently held in its behalf realised more than £500; there is the nucleus of a good Reference Library and Museum in the sum of £250, lately given for the purpose; and the Town Commissioners have £400 in their hands from rates levied for the Library, and ready to be expended in its behalf. And all this in the very heart of the Black Country.

are free. The incumbency, worth originally, it would seem, only £4 a year, is now a valuable living, the income of which is variously stated as from £635 to £900 a year. The inhabitants have for a long time had the privilege of nomination and election thereto. This has come to be regarded as a valuable popular right, and the election is sometimes as hotly contested as that of any member of parliament.

It is said that there is a public-house here to every twenty dwelling-houses, or one for every 120 of the population; and we are told that "almost every other house in the High Street is a liquor shop." "I wish I was King of Bilston for an hour," said one of the magistrates lately, "I would soon do away with all the public-houses." The total abstinence cause in Bilston has been a comparative failure. It has been in existence there about sixteen years, but numbers only about 150 members who may be considered true to their principles, a very small army compared with the strength and influence of the enemy against whom their warfare is waged. Many of the public-houses are large spirit shops, doing extensive business all the week long, but thronged with customers from six o'clock to twelve on Saturday nights, and also on Mondays. Others again are small, doing little business; many of them constantly changing hands, and never paying their way. But probably not less than £10 a week is taken on the average by each; and as there are about two hundred, it may be said that £2,000 is spent every week in the town for drink. Trade is now very brisk, but the extra earnings go into the publicans' tills, from 20s. to 40s. being often paid as the fortnightly drink score by single workmen.

Yonder is Willenhall, another ancient town, celebrated for its locks, which give employment to several thousand people. (Mr. J. C. Tildesley, of the firm of Carpenter and Tildesley, of this place, contributed a most valuable and interesting historical and statistical paper on Locks and Lock-making to the Industrial History of Birmingham and the Midland Hardware District.) The introduction of the lock trade into South Staffordshire took place as early as the reign of Elizabeth; but it did not flourish very greatly till the end of the seventeenth century, when it became one of the chief industries of the district. The locks then manufactured were purchased by chapmen, who travelled from place to place with pack-horses. Early in the eighteenth century, however, the merchants began to establish store-rooms in Wolverhampton and Birmingham, whither the locks were conveyed by the smiths in wallets, a system not even yet quite gone out. It has been said that "more locks of all kinds are made in Willenhall than in any other town of the same size in Europe," and we at the same time learn that so great is the rapidity of production of the cheapest sorts, that "if a Willenhall locksmith happens to let a lock fall in the course of manufacture, he will not stay to pick it up, as he can make another more quickly." They are celebrated also for their ingenuity. In the year 1776, one James Lees, a Willenhall workman in his sixty-fourth year, made a lock and key, the weight of which did not exceed that of a silver twopence; and he expressed his readiness to make a dozen locks and keys, the total weight of which should not be more than a silver sixpence. Many boys are employed with the men in lock-making. "Sometimes," says Mr. Horne, a government commissioner, "men and boys eat their

meals at leisure; the former at intervals between drinking and smoking, the latter while playing at marbles or going on errands. This is on Monday and Tuesday. In the middle and latter end of the week, men and boys eat their victuals while they work, or bolt their victuals standing. You see a locksmith and his two apprentices with a plate before each of them heaped up (at the best of times, when they can get such things) with potatoes and lumps of something or other, but seldom meat, and a large slice of bread in one hand. Your attention is called off for two minutes, and on turning round again you see the man and boys filing away at the vice."

The readers of "Sybil" will recall the description given of the masters and apprentices of the past by Disraeli. "These master workmen form a powerful aristocracy, nor is it possible to conceive one apparently more oppressive. They are ruthless tyrants; they habitually inflict upon their subjects punishments more grievous than the slave populations of our colonies were ever visited with; not content with beating them with sticks, or flogging them with knotted ropes, they are in the habit of felling them with hammers, or cutting their heads open with a file or lock. The most usual punishment, however, or rather stimulus to increased exertion, is to pull an apprentice's ears till they run with blood. These youths, too, are worked for sixteen and even twenty hours a day; they are often sold by one master to another; they are fed on carrion, and they sleep in lofts or cellars." An apprentice himself is represented in "Sybil" as giving the following account of his treatment by his master: "I should like to have a crown for every time he has cut my head open. He cut it open once with a key and twice with a lock; he knocked the corner of a lock into my head twice, once with a bolt, and once with a shut. He hit me on the head with a hammer once. That was a blow! I fell away that time. When I came to, master had stopped the blood with some fur from his hat. I had to go on with my work immediately; master said I should do my stint if I worked till twelve o'clock at night. Many's the ash stick he has broken on my body; sometimes the weals remained on me for a week. He cut my eyelid open once with a nut-stick; cut a regular hole in it, and it bled all over the files I was working at. He has pulled my ears sometimes that I thought they must come off in his hand." Again, they are described as "lank and haggard youths, who never for an instant dared to raise their dingy faces and lacklustre eyes from their ceaseless labour."

Many changes have taken place since "Sybil" was written. We are told that apprentices hardly ever now live in the house with their masters, but at home with their parents. (We learn that they "live well," too; they like the very best animal food, and get it; and they dress "like gentlemen.") And the present race of apprentices is far better educated, more intelligent, and better behaved, than any former one; and, as a rule, the masters treat them well. Indeed, the apprentices know that they are under the protection of the law, and persistently claim all the advantages to which the law entitles them. We are told that there is only one small hamlet hereabout where the Workshop Regulation Act is to any extent evaded. Still, the great evil of the trade is its distribution among little masters without capital. It is supposed that at the present time there are not less than 600 master lock-

smiths in Willenhall and its neighbourhood. It would seem, moreover, that there is a system of "long agreements" between masters and workmen in vogue here, by which mechanics are bound over to their employers for years; and in one case lately brought to light, a master had bound over some of his workpeople to his exclusive service for six years!—a kind of serfdom which, it is thought, prevails largely in Willenhall. The men—poor fellows!—being of the "old school"—are ignorant, have not time, they say, to improve themselves—and, as a rule, seem very badly paid. We are told that only a clever lockmaker, nimble with his fingers, and labouring hard from Monday morning till Saturday night—they work by "the piece"—can earn 25s. a week. The people are addicted to the observance of "St. Monday," but ordinarily work twelve, thirteen, and sometimes fourteen hours a day, and that, moreover, in ill-lit and ill-ventilated workshops. In many cases, too, the wages are not paid till nine, ten, and even eleven o'clock on Saturday night; and sometimes the masters keep beershops, where the men are expected to spend part of their money. Yet it *may* have been (as some say) a sign of good feeling (notwithstanding all this) between the workmen and their masters—it is, at all events, a remarkable circumstance that a meeting of the masters was lately called together at the request of the workpeople respecting an increase of wages, which the latter desired, but were unwilling to demand unless their employers could obtain an advance on their selling prices; and that the meeting ended in the masters suggesting that the workmen should *strike* for more money! Some of the latter, however, have since formed a co-operative Lock-manufacturing Company.

A recent trade report tells us that at Willenhall "bolts and latches are open to improvement, and currycombs are only quiet." And again we read, "Currycombs are steadier." These remarks, strange as they may seem to the uninitiated, indicate the condition of other trades. Currycombs are largely manufactured here for export to America.

The population of Willenhall, which in 1861 was 17,256, in 1871 was 18,148. The housetops swarm with pigeons, for, popular as pigeon-flying is in the Black Country generally, it is more so here perhaps than anywhere else. The consequence is much gambling, noise, and disorder, with which drinking and fighting are associated. The people must be very intimately related, for we have somewhere read that a Willenhall girl will, for the most part, only marry one of her own townsmen, and that a stranger husband would be looked upon with something like doubt and suspicion. But we fancy this prejudice is wearing out; and, besides, "love laughs at locksmiths." The living, like that of Bilston, is in the gift of the inhabitants. There are four churches and many dissenting chapels, day and Sunday schools; the town is improving, and a Freehold Land and Building Society, which is likely to be very useful, has just been established. But the River Tame, described by Dr. Hartill, of Willenhall, as "an elongated cesspool," intersects it, and its odour is almost deadly. This wide-spreading pollution of streams and of rivers is now a question of national importance.

Willenhall is not unknown in history. Saxons and Danes have battled on its soil (it seems, indeed, to owe its name to a Saxon victory); Charles II found a refuge there (at Bentley Hall), and left it, on his

memorable journey to Bristol, with fair Jane Lane, as his mistress, on a pillion behind him, the king wearing her father's livery. (Miss Lane afterwards married Sir Clement Fisher, Baronet, of Packington Hall, Warwickshire.) Bentley Hall is now occupied as a parsonage by the incumbent.

Dr. Richard Wilkes, the eminent antiquary, whose collections are incorporated in Shaw's "Staffordshire," was a native of Willenhall.

Near Willenhall is Wednesfield—another old town, deriving its name from Woden, the Saxon idol, to whom it was dedicated in memory of a great Saxon victory—now famous for traps of all kinds, big and little, and having a population of about 9,000, with the distinction of having more schools than any other "village" or parish in Staffordshire, though they are very thinly attended. It is now divided into two townships—Wednesfield and Heath Town—each of which has a church.

Near Wednesfield is a village called "New Invention," some genius at one time living there having made a discovery of his so much his hobby and talk, that his house, and afterwards all the houses in the place, received this nick-name, which it has ever since borne. Not far off is a "settlement" bearing the euphonious title of Moseley Hole; and we are told "there are houses in it that are holes which ought not to be allowed to be choked up with humanity. The road is always in holes, the fields at the side are all holes, and there are holes about which help to breed contagion before, behind, and around the poor people's dwellings." Within easy distance is the village of Portobello, beneath which are some very rich coal beds.

Hard by Willenhall stands Darlaston, famous for gun locks, nuts, and screw-bolts, hinges, and stirrups. It is one of "the seven old parishes"—Wednesbury, Tipton, Bilston, West Bromwich, Willenhall, Darlaston, and Wolverhampton—into which this district was originally divided, and which are now separated into thirty-one, each with its church and incumbent. This is indeed an improvement! Our mind reverts again to John Wesley. "The mob of Darlaston," says his brother Charles, "were permitted to take and carry him about for several hours with a full intent to murder him; but his work is not yet finished, or he had been with the souls under the altar." We regret to find that here, as elsewhere, children are taken from school at an early age, to be employed in the shops and factories. The Darlaston Green Steel and Iron Company are colliers, as well as steel and iron manufacturers; they employ about 1,500 men, and pay about £60,000 a year in wages. The population of Darlaston, which in 1861 was 13,230, in 1871 was 14,724.

There are many other places in the Black Country which we have not noticed, and of which we can now say nothing. We approach Wolverhampton. There, by Willenhall, is Bentley Hall, the house in which King Charles lay concealed after the battle of Worcester. From yon lofty Gothic tower bursts a joyous chime, which seems to welcome us to the good old town! It is the noble embattled and pinnacled tower of St. Peter's (formerly St. Mary's) which opens upon us its cheery fire! and well does it thus take upon itself to represent the hospitality of Wolverhampton, for this is the chief town in the diocese of Lichfield, and, great as it is in industry and trade, its history is far more ecclesiastical than either mining or commercial.

Varieties.

MR. C. SUMNER ON THE WASHINGTON TREATY.—In a letter to Mr. Smalley, 18th June, 1871, he wrote:—"I am sorry that so conspicuous a negotiation did not end in more for international law. We ought to have got more, and mankind should also. There should have been a consecration of the great principle of immunity of private property on the ocean; also the denunciation as a pirate of any ship plundering and burning prizes at sea without taking them into port for adjudication; also the recognition of the duty of a neutral Power to exclude from its ports in time of war any armed vessel engaged in hostilities which does not hold a commission delivered in some port of military or naval equipment in the actual occupation of the commissioning Government. These provisions deal with evils which became manifest during our war, and I always hoped that the final treaty would not neglect them. With such safeguards for civilisation, I would have been content with less for my own country. Such a treaty I could not have opposed even if it gave us nothing."

SENSATIONAL WRITERS.—Mr. Mark Lemon, in one of the earliest numbers of "Punch," strongly satirized the style of sensational story-writing then beginning to prevail. It was in a series of valentines, one being addressed to "The Literary Gentleman," "Literary ladies" have since outshamed literary gentlemen in their stories of bigamy and blackguardism, stories forced into notice by reviews in the papers, and sent to poison young readers in our circulating libraries. The piece ended thus:—

"Crush bones—bruise flesh—recount each festering sore—
 Rake up the plague-pit—write—and write in gore!
 Or, when inspired to humanise mankind,
 Where doth your soaring soul its subjects find?
 Not 'mid the scenes that simple Goldsmith sought
 And found a theme to elevate his thought;
 But you, great scribe, more greedy of renown,
 From Hounslow's gibbet drag a hero down;
 Imbue his mind with virtue; make him quote
 Some moral truth, before he cuts a throat.
 And, fearing lest the world should miss the act,
 With noble zeal flatter the fact.
 Or, would you picture woman, meek and pure,
 By love and virtue tutor'd to endure!—
 With cunning skill you take a felon's trull,
 Stuff her with sentiment, and scrunch her skull!
 Oh! would your crashing, smashing, mashing pen were mine,
 That I could 'scorch your eye-balls' with my words,
 "MY VALENTINE."

JAPAN DESCRIBED BY A NATIVE.—A Japanese author, Kato Sukeichi, has written a valuable statement on commercial relations with foreign nations, a translation of which, by Mr. W. C. Aston, appears in "The Phoenix," a magazine devoted to Chinese and Japanese subjects. The statement commences with a patriotic description of the islands:—"Great Japan, ruled by our wise Emperors, is superior to all other countries in the world. It has a moderate climate, and there are no intolerable extremes of heat or cold. Therefore trees and herbs grow luxuriantly, rice, wheat, and all kinds of grain are produced in abundance, and rape, radishes, and other vegetables attain a great size. The tea plant and silk were originally introduced from China, but by reason of the goodness of the Japanese soil, their cultivation has been even more successful here than in their native country, where our teas and silks are highly valued. This fact alone is sufficient to prove the goodness of the Japanese soil. It cannot be said that there are not in China and in Europe countries which enjoy as good a climate as Japan, but then they contain deserts or bare ranges of mountains extending for hundreds of miles, and rendering wide regions unfit for cultivation, or else the crops are inferior, owing to some noxious quality in the soil. In Japan there are no such districts. It is true that in Dewa, Oshiu, and other provinces, there are wide plains which remain uncultivated, but this is not on account of the barrenness of the soil. They lie waste because the inhabitants are few in number and insufficient for the labour of reclaiming them. That such should be the case is no more than might be expected, seeing that there is sufficient food and clothing for the inhabitants without bringing these remote districts under cultivation. Nor are the mountains of Japan so high as to shut out the light of the sun and render agriculture impossible. On the contrary, from their sides are dug gold and silver, copper and iron, in sufficient quantity to supply the wants of the nation. In truth, Japan is the very finest country on the face of the globe. We have now entered into friendly relations with the countries beyond the sea, and their subjects are incessantly visiting Japan: we have become acquainted with the character of the natives of

each, and are able to compute the amount of its productions, but among the 3,000 countries of the world, there is none which excels Japan. A foreigner resident at Yokohama once said, 'Take any of the best seaports in the world, if there is a simultaneous competition, some articles of produce will soon be exhausted, but here at Yokohama all nations have been competing with one another ever since the port was opened, and yet there is not the least sign of exhaustion. It would be difficult to find anywhere else in the world a seaport where produce comes to market all the more plentifully the more it is bought.' This was about five years ago, but now the trade has increased tenfold, and there is not a month in which transactions do not take place to the amount of 2,000,000 *rios* (ounces of silver). Truly Japan is the very first among the fine countries of the world! But though we who have been born in such an excellent country have no need to go abroad for our supplies, and have quite sufficient for our wants without trading with foreigners, there are, nevertheless, good reasons why our country, though it wants for nothing, should maintain commercial relations."

PROGRESS IN JAPAN.—Almost every paragraph in the news from Japan is highly suggestive of the rapid social revolution that is going forward. Railways have quickly become popular, and a scheme for tramways in Yokohama is in progress, in connection with which two cars have arrived. A society for the prevention of cruelty to animals has been formed; the Government is occupied with measures to prevent prostitution; and the principle of free trade, though not thoroughly accepted, is so far recognised that it is proposed in the revision of treaties next year to expunge the clause prohibiting the export of rice. The young Mikado is leading his subjects in the Europeanising movement. He is no longer a hidden mystery, but appears openly among his people. He attends public ceremonies, such as that at the beginning of a new railway, learns German, and drinks champagne. Next year it is in contemplation to open the country freely to foreigners; and finally, in proof of Japanese progress, the British sentiment that there is "nothing like leather," has so taken hold of the Government that an order has gone forth for soldiers and all officials to wear leathern shoes of approved Western pattern. These are Japanese signs of the times. —*Home-ward Mail.*

JAMAICA AS IT IS.—The condition of the island has greatly improved since the introduction of the new Constitution four years ago. The import dues have been reduced, and the tonnage dues upon trading vessels abolished. There has been a surplus of £30,000 for 1870-71, though the reduction of taxation amounted to £41,000 during the previous two years. The public debt has been reduced by £227,800, and will be entirely paid off in twenty-seven years. Much demoralisation was formerly caused by the squatting system. The uncultivated lands of the colony have now been taken possession of by the Government where no owner is apparent, in virtue of a Bill passed by the Legislative Council, and leases are granted. The result is that the squatters get a good lease at a fair rent in exchange for their previously precarious tenure. Public works are being carried out at considerable cost, and efforts are making to acclimatise valuable trees and plants hitherto unknown in the island. While the material condition of Jamaica is thus satisfactory, its mental condition is full of promise. Schools are increasing, and their standard of instruction has risen considerably since 1865.

THE GIPSY CONFERENCE.—The pretty little town of Cannstadt, near Stuttgart, in the kingdom of Wurtemberg, was lately the scene of one of the most extraordinary gatherings that have been assembled for years. The meeting of the great Parliament of gipsies or Bohemians opened, and the deliberations continued from day to day. The president was Joseph Reinhard, now remarkable as having attained the great age of ninety-eight, and the meeting consisted of delegates from all the tribes of gipsies scattered throughout Europe. Here were represented the Gitanos of Spain, the Cignani of Italy, the Zigeuner of Russia, and our own familiar but rather unpopular tribe of gipsies. The Parliament is a septennial one, and its deliberations are directed to further the interests of this nomad race, whose members are to be found in every part of the globe. It has been known for a long time that this Parliament would hold its deliberations at Cannstadt, and as the institutions and even the origin of gipsies form a subject of great interest to savants, the different towns of Wurtemberg poured into the little village quite a crowd of antiquaries, philosophers, and inquiring tourists.